XV

The Mataguayos

In the year 1884 the Reverend Father Alejandro María Covrado in collaboration with another missionary published in Florence certain Noticias Históricas [Historical Information] originating in the Franciscan College of Tarija and other missions, and in appendix L we find a very important account with reference to the Mataguayos which I shall quote: - page 535, etc. "The Mataguayos are spread over a vast region of the Chaco, especially the left bank of the Bermejo and the right bank of the Pilcomayo. On the Salta frontier they are commonly called Matacos, and Noctenes on the Tarija frontier, which is a corrupt form of Octenai, a name [592] given them by the Chiriguanos and which, in turn, appears to be a corruption of Huenneyei (1), which is what the

1. Plural of the word which means men.
(J. Pelleschi)

Mataguayos call themselves. By way of epilogue we shall give an account of what was reported, regarding the ways and customs of these savage tribes, by a missionary of this college who lived amongst them for many years:

"In their features and coloring the Mataguayos, Matacos or Noctenes, which are one and the same people, are very little different from the Chiriguanos. Their customs however are very different, and their languages absolutely so. Their villages are small, consisting usually of the several branches of only one family. They do not like to construct them in open places, preferring the dense forests and reed beds. The dwelling places are small huts made of branches or cane stuck in the ground, bent over and gathered at the ends, and covered with straw. On the inside they are similar to ovens; they are less than two meters high and their size is proportionate to the number of people to be housed in them. The ground passes for their bed, and is either quite bare or else covered with a mat of rushes or the skin of some animal. Cleanliness is utterly lacking. When the place gets to be full of fleas or other insects or filth they burn their hovels and build others not far off.

M
[774] some animal according to its merits in this life. They also recognize
776 with the name Ohott-at (1) (great spirit) a superior being who created

1. "O'hot" = spiritness; "tat" and "taj" = augmentative (J.P.)

them, but they do not worship this being at all. They are in great fear of an evil being who, wandering about at night, harms man, for which reason they call it Onnescilele (2) (night wanderer) and commit

2. "Onne" (hunat) = night; "sci" = locative; "lēle" = patronimic (J.P.)

themselves to his service in order to win his good will."

XVI

Some Observations on the Previous Chapter

M
114 The notes on appendix L written by Father Alejandro M.
●101 Corrado are full of material of interest for this treatise. In them he establishes that "Matacos, Mataguayos and Noctenes are one and the same thing" explaining that in Salta they are called Matacos, and in Tarija Noctenes, while the Mataguayos themselves refer to themselves as Huenneyei.

According to the good Father the name Noctenes is a corruption of Octenai, a term used by the Chiriguayos to refer to these Indians. I find myself incompetent to argue this point about the origin of the name Noctenes; but since the Tobas and Guaycurúes owe it to the Guaraníes that they are known to us by their present names it would not be at all strange that a similar thing had happened in this case also.

T
M We are given to understand by this account that not everyone
101 calls the Mataguayos Noctenes, and one can understand that this is
114 the cause of the disappearance of the Tonocoté nation. Tonocoté was a name limited to certain tribes only, but which doubtless was extended to many others, as far as language goes, because it was the first learned

M T by the missionaries and because it served them well in catechising all 114 the members of the same language family.

101 Father Cardus writes Noctenes in such a way that the obtrusive "c" participates to a degree in the sound which the Mocovíes add to every [597] medial "t" (see "Mocoví Fonologia" [Mocoví Phonology]). Because of this variant we can see that the Mataco-Mataguayos could just as well be called Noctenes as Notenes.

From the sound of the name Tonocoté I would say that it is made up of Noctenes or Notenes plus the Chaquense and very Mataco prefix "to" which means "the." The final "n" is of Spanish influence and is merely indicative of nationality. A parallel to this is that we say Tobas when the actual root word is "obá"—face—because the Guaraní language attaches to all its nouns etc. a demonstrative prefix of relation which can be "t", "r", etc.

Hervas speaks of Toconotés, Techo and others of Tonocotés. To my way of seeing it the difference of opinion can be resolved in the following manner: "Noté" is the same as "Nocoté," and the prefixes "To" and "Toco" are also identical by way of the well known degeneration "Toco" "Toho" "To." I mention the latter because even though "Nocten" and "Noten" may agree exactly in that they refer to the same thing, the qualifying prefix need not necessarily be the same in both cases.

Until such time as some more reasonable explanation appears or some contrary one is put forward I claim that the terms Tonocoté, Toconoté, Nocten and Noten have identical lexical value.

Every student of the Guaraní and related Chaco languages must needs confess that "t" and "to" are never more than demonstrative prefixes. I do not deny that "Toco" may have a more concrete meaning, such as—Colorado, the Tenco River, etc. What matters is that recognition be given to the fact that the Noctenes or Notenes may be the To-nocotes of history. This would explain all the contradictions to be found in the writings of Machoni, Jolís and Hervas.

It is inconceivable that a nation as strong as the Tonocoté could have disappeared amidst so much else that has been preserved. It was the typical Mataco, Mataguayo, Matará etc. tribe which tradition says had exiled itself to the basin of the Pilcomayo—there we find Noctenes or Notenes, which are Matacos and Mataguayos. We are then in the position of having to confess that these Indians are, more or less, the Tonocotés of history, and that the name had been lost because it was a

T
M nickname given them by neighboring nations who then stopped using
114 it. The name has cropped up again at the present time because the
101 missionaries have returned to those missions from the Chiriguano side and have adopted the name by which the latter usually referred to them.

Even if it were a matter of a name originating in the nation itself there would be some latitude in its transliteration, but the fact being that they are [598] nicknames invented by other Indians and heard and transcribed by the Spaniards allows of much greater freedom, and I do not believe that the hypothesis that the Noctenes of Father Corrado are the Tonocotés of Father Techo is so fantastic a one.

It may not be superfluous to note that the Indians whom we call Tobas call themselves by the name Tocouitt, which, compared to the other Mocouitt leaves as residue the word Toco which could be compared to the "Toco" or "To" of the Indians treated in this chapter. In the Toba and other allied languages the "C" is a false sound and the syncopation of syllables is the rule.

XVII

What Father Cardús Has to Say About the Matacos, Mataguayos, etc.

M
114 The Reverend Franciscan Father José Cardús published in Barcelona in 1886 his work entitled "Las Misiones Franciscanas" [The Franciscan Missions] of Bolivia in connection with the College of San José de Tarata. In it we find the following information about the Matacos (pages 250 to 258) which I shall quote, thus opening myself up to criticism for over prolixity, yet I feel I am justified because the information is important and credible since the missionaries write with exactness of what they have seen and known at close quarters.

I have not seen the Matacos and do not know them, and I am wary of allowing myself to be carried away by preconceived notions. Yet I must of necessity quote and not comment upon my authors who will thus say what they wish to say and not what some other person wishes them to say.

It can be said that from the time of the Conquest such information as we have about the Indians in their ramifications and languages we owe to the Missionary Fathers. Any attempt to write about these Indians whom the Spaniards found on our continent really has to take very specially into account the writings of these meritorious soldiers of Christ.

"The Matacos are also known by the names Mataguayos, Notenes, Vejoses, Ocoles, Malbalas, Chunupis (1) and others, according to location. All of them with only slight differences speak the same language and their customs are practically identical. They occupy the western part of central and southern Chaco, principally both banks of the Bermejo River and the right bank of the Pilcomayo." [599]

1. Not to be confused with the Chunupi-Vilelas.

"The number of these Indians is probably about 20,000. Some of them already have dealings with the frontier Christians, among whom they spend some time each year, working on their ranches; while others live in complete isolation from the whites, whom they regard as their enemies, and not without reason, especially the Argentines who for some years now have been systematically ousting them from their lands, persecuting and exterminating them. It is probable then that within a few years the Matacos will have undergone great changes in their manner of living and will have diminished in number. Be that as it may the present day Matacos are still constituents of quite a large tribe which is different in some respects from the others.

The Mataco is of middling stature, somewhat slim and of a dark coppery color; apathetic in nature, reserved and wary, his glance reflects suspicion and treachery. His manners are boorish and his person and physiognomy vile and repulsive. He is a thief by instinct and he also steals because he considers it his duty. He is long-suffering and warlike, lazy and dirty in habit and innately cowardly and vengeful. The individual members of the neighboring tribes are characterized by a mental alertness which, though untutored is there for all to see. Not so the Matacos, who are mentally sluggish and to whom one cannot even attribute astuteness, in spite of their being sneak thieves. They are admired by all for the apparent lack of feeling with which they endure insults and also for the cold-bloodedness with which they will stab an enemy or allow themselves to be stabbed."

114 It is strange that in the last two reports so much importance has been given to the Noctén tribes about which nothing is said by authors writing in colonial times. This in itself already tends to favor the hypothesis that the Noctenes may be the Tonocotés.

In this part of the continent it does not seem that there occurred that veritable extermination of whole tribes, such as was the case with the Charruas in Uruguay and we must therefore search about somewhere for the 60,000 and more Indians who understood or spoke the Tonocoté language. Among them were the Mataguayos, who exist down to the present day; it would be only natural, then, to affirm that Mataguayo is a dialect of Tonocoté, and since Noctén and Mataguayo are closely related dialects, it follows that Noctén is as much a dialect of Tonocoté as is Mataguayo.

In the following chapter I shall set forth a report which was sent to me by Father Eliseo Molina of the Franciscan College at Tarija. [609]

XIX

What Father Doroteo Giannecchini has to Say Regarding the Noctenes and Other Mataco Tribes

● 101 "The Noctenes, Matacos, Vejoses, Guiznaes, and Chulupies belong to one single nation, for all speak the same language and have the same customs."

184 "Such nations are differentiated by their name and by traits which I shall call provincial or local."

101 "Our Noctenes, for example, who are the ones who inhabit the
131 country between the foot of the Pisapo mountain range and Pikírenda, 50 or 60 leagues to the east, are called Noctenes. In the vicinity of Pikírenda they take the name of Guiznaes; but they are of the same family as our Noctenes and are even related to them by blood."

"From Pikírenda onwards, some 30 leagues, more or less, and up to the Paraguay River they take the name of Chulupies; and along the whole right bank of the Pilcomayo River, from our first Noctén mission on to the Paraguay River, it is the same tribe: their

101 131 speech and customs are somewhat different, but in substance it is the same language, and they understand each other perfectly when each speaks in his own way."

"Across from the Colonia Crevaux, on the left bank towards the north there is another tribe called Chorotis which must originally have been a group captured by the Noctenes for their language is a true Mataco or Noctén dialect and many words are identical with Noctén words."

"It is true that these Chorotis live as unto themselves forming a separate tribe, but they are related to and have continual dealings with the Noctenes. Their pronunciation is, however, much clearer and more intelligible than that of the Noctenes."

"These same Noctenes are related to the Matacos of Oran and the Chaco, in which place the Noctenes are called Matacos, and the Matacos living between the left bank of the Oran River and the reservation in which we had a mission at the beginning of this century, take the name of Vejoses, and have their own local way of speaking the same language as the Noctenes and Matacos. Higher up, that is in our Bolivian Itiyuro, they again take the name of Matacos." [610]

[197] "The fact is then that they do not have what might be called a separate language—rather do they vary the pronunciation of certain terms which does not constitute a separate language but a local variation, as happens with the Spanish of Bolivians, Argentines, Chilians, etc., and between town and town, region and region."

This description was sent to me when I asked for a Pater-noster in Mataguayo, having already received one in Nocten.

114 All that has been transcribed in the previous chapters shows that in the opinion of the missionary fathers the typical tribe was the Nocten, and that this is the name they use where we would say Matacos and Mataguayos. It is to be understood, then, that Nocten is nothing but a corruption of the name Tonocoté or Toconoté, already mentioned.

XX

Geographic Distribution of Mataco-type Nations

101 131 From all that has been told us by the Fathers of the Company and of the Franciscan Missions it can be deduced that the Mataco tribes occupy a diagonal region which in times past extended from the basin

101 131 of the Salado (1) River to the Pilcomayo, hemmed in towards the

1. From Matará northwards.

mountains by tribes of Quichua influence and others, and in the direction of the Río de la Plata by nations of the Toba-Guaycurú type. This vast region was bounded on the north by Chiriguano territory, and on the south by the Quichuas and Pampas of the Guaycurú-Querandí type.

174 It appears at present that the basin of the Salado River ceased to be territory of the nomad Matacos who, in the past century, were replaced by the Mocovíes and other tribes of a more definite Guycurú type. Lozano in his first volume and on page 175 (Lamas Ed.) says that "gasta" means town in the Tonocoté language. This being the case these tribes must have entered the valleys of Yocavil and Londres also, for all the Andean region is full of places whose names end in "gasta" (2). According to my observations "gasta" is as Cacan a word

2. In none of the Mataco-Mataguayo dialects does the term "gasta" appear.

as is "ao."

In any case one thing must needs be conceded and that is that the Mataco tribes had shifted towards the southwest up to the Aconquija range. [611]

221 The Matacos, like the Tobas and other Guaycurú nations are and were nomads, and of course one cannot indicate exactly the areas frequented by them when they were on the move; at one time they would go in one direction, at another in another, according to pressure from more warlike tribes or from the Spaniards.

221 174 All agree that after the Spanish conquest numerous tribes of Matacos or Tonocotes withdrew towards the Pilcomayo River basin and this is exactly what would have been expected because there they were less exposed to Spanish raiders who would carry off any Indian they found to forced labor; these they used to call piezas "pieces of ordinance"--Translator].

1: Pelleschi--56 C-5 (ca. 1875) 1896 SI7 Mataco SI7
Chaco Indians SK4

XXI

Ethnology of the Mataco-Tonocoté Nation or People

M
101 If it is difficult to fix the point or home territory of the Matacos, it is no less difficult to determine their ethnic origin. We lack the first requirement which is the craniology of these Indians: without that information we shall not be able to advance far, but we can at least go a little way by means of the language.

C
197 Basing my assertions on what will later be said regarding the language, I find that in the Chaco, as in the rest of America, the languages can be grouped grammatically into two large families. The one suffixes its pronominal particles, the other prefixes them. The former is represented by the nations which are Guaraní-like, and I therefore call it Atlantic, while the latter is made up of Quichua-like nations, for which reason I call it Andean or Pacific.

M
197 Holding to this classification, the Matacos as pure prefixers of the majority of pronominal particles,can be neither Lules, nor Vilelas, nor Quichuas, nor Aucasni, nor Aymaraes, since all these languages suffix these particles.

In spite of everything there exist among the Matacos and Lules certain lexical analogies which lead one to suspect some mixture, which would then certainly explain that greater placidity which is characteristic of both nations in the midst of the ferocious Guaycurues of the other parts of the Chaco. [612]

These analogies between Lules and Matacos are only of single words, but the pronouns and their particles are separated, "toto orbe." The same does not occur between the Mataco and the Quichua or Aymará: the first and second person primitive pronouns are somewhat more than merely similar, and this is reason enough to recognize that there was some original contact between the two peoples, though it is true that the Matacos are more backward.

To say that any given grouping of American Indians is of mixed origin is to come close to the truth, for in all probability not one is to be found which is not. In the present instance and judging from the point of view of linguistics, I tend to believe that the Mataco has in it some Lule and some Quichua.

This is not enough. In the reports which preface this study we have seen that the Matacos and Guaycurú-Tobas always go about together,

until the contrary is proved we must suppose that Mataco is Tonocoté.
/97/ A language as strongly rooted as this one could not possibly have become lost in the Chaco.

The Mataco language is one of the most widely used languages and is spoken by the largest grouping [618] of Indians in the Argentine and Bolivian Chacos, and yet we do not find it mentioned in any writings. One can therefore only deduce that the language of the Matacos is Tonocoté; this being the only rational hypothesis which for the present fits the case.

As far as languages go we can state that what the Mojos are to the Chiquitos, the Matacos are to the Chaco tribes of the Toba-Mocoví type, and just as the former have their Mosetana tribes so the latter have their Lules and Vilelas.

XXIII

Regarding the Names Tonocoté, Mataco and Mataguayo

/101/ Nothing better has been written about this than what Hervás has set down in his "Catálogo de las Lenguas" (Catalogue of Languages) on pages 168 and 172. He asserts that the Tonocotés are the Indians called Matarás and says the following:- "Matarás is a Peruvian word which is used to signify a grass which in Spanish is often called "espadaña," etc. The words Tonocot and Toconoté (read Tonocoté) have no meaning whatever in the Lule language, according to the missionaries to the Lule nation, who have told me that they have never heard that the Tonocotés or the Matarás (who are really the Toconotés) (1) were in any way related to the Lules. Yet the Indians

/101/
/191/

1. Hervas always writes Toconoté instead of Tonocoté.

consider other tribes related to theirs when they speak the same language; a missionary to the Matarás has told me that he heard his Indians speak, on occasion, a language which was unknown to him and that when he had inquired as to what language it was he learned that it was an ancient language of the Matarás; but since this

missionary knows only the Quichua tongue, with which he communicated with the Matarás, it still is a moot question as to whether the Matará and Tonocoté languages are totally different or only dialects of the same language."

This short paragraph is one more proof of what I have been saying for some time, which is that the Fathers of the Company left more Quichua than they found in the regions which they evangelized. The Indians learn the neighboring languages with great ease: they have good memories, a well tuned ear and they pay much attention to everything which may be useful to them. [619]

The names Mataco and Mataguayo which in Father Techo refer to certain groupings and today are generic names of these tribes and their languages, are not the names with which the Indians used to refer to themselves. They called themselves Uicquñ.

To go into the etymology of the name Mataco without knowing who the first people were who applied such a name to these Indians would be a sterile job. It is probably a Quichua term or root and the only thing which might be said about it is this: that in the terms Churu-matas, Matará, Mataco and Mataguayo we find the common root Mata, which doubtless referred to some thing which was called by that name and which had to do with the persons or customs of these Indians or with the region they inhabited.

It is a strange thing that almost all the names by which we know the indigenous peoples of the Americas are artificial ones, as for example the name Guaraní; and the Matacos are by no means an exception to this rule. The Tobas called themselves Ntocovítt, and the Matacos, Uicquñ. Later, if we are able to prove that the Mataco "cq." is a mutation of "tt.," it may be seen that Uicq and Uitt are simply two variant forms of the same word meaning man.

Conclusion

An account has already been given of the Mataco Indians from the time of the coming of the Spaniards and the conquest of Tucumán in the sixteenth century. As the reader must have remarked we owed the information which we had to the Missionary Fathers, whose only object was to win souls for heaven and whose efforts in the direction of learning was limited to the end of reproducing for their catechumens, in a

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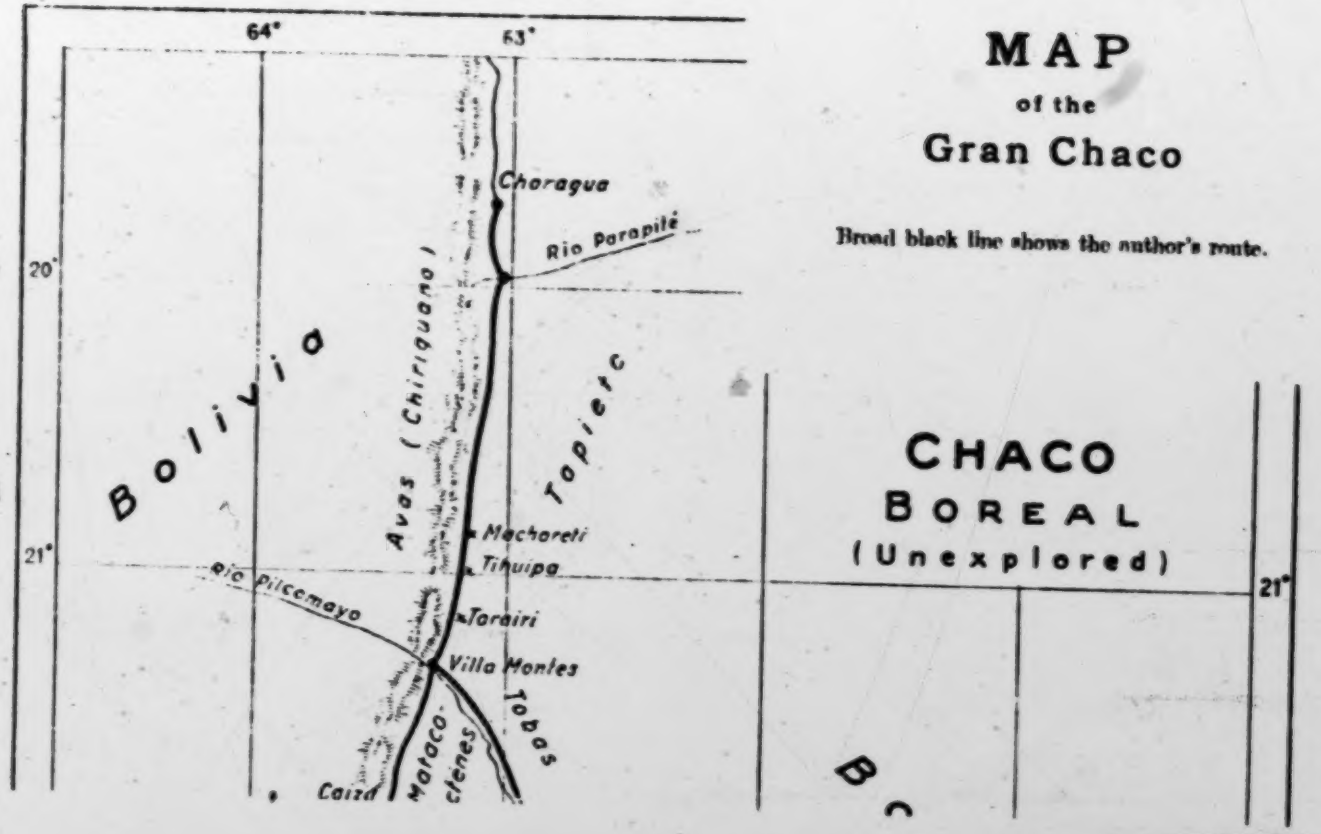
2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Matsco S17

MAP
of the
Gran Chaco

Broad black line shows the author's route.



[Eud Map (A)]

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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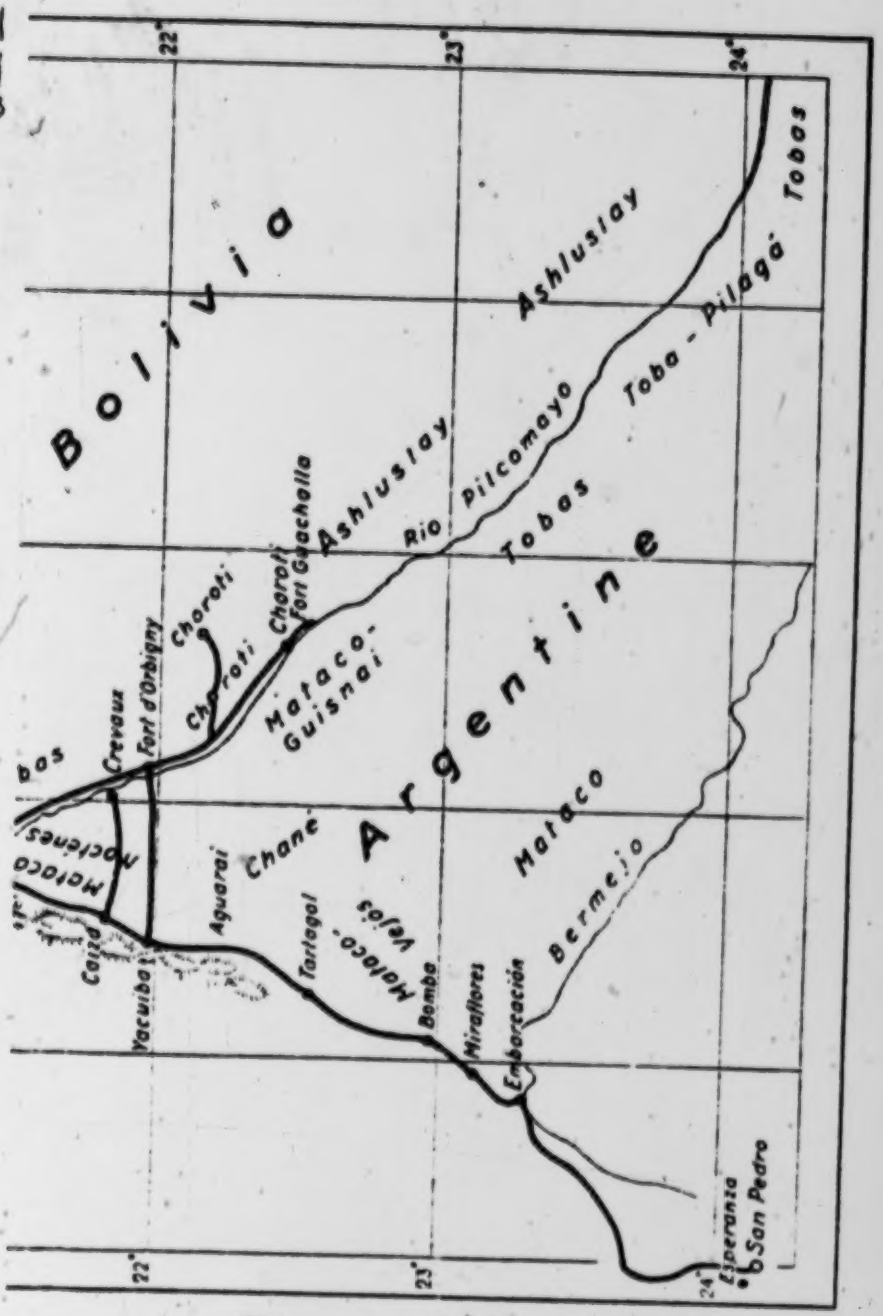

[End Map (B)]

8: Moore E-4 (no date) 1965 SI7 Mataco SI7

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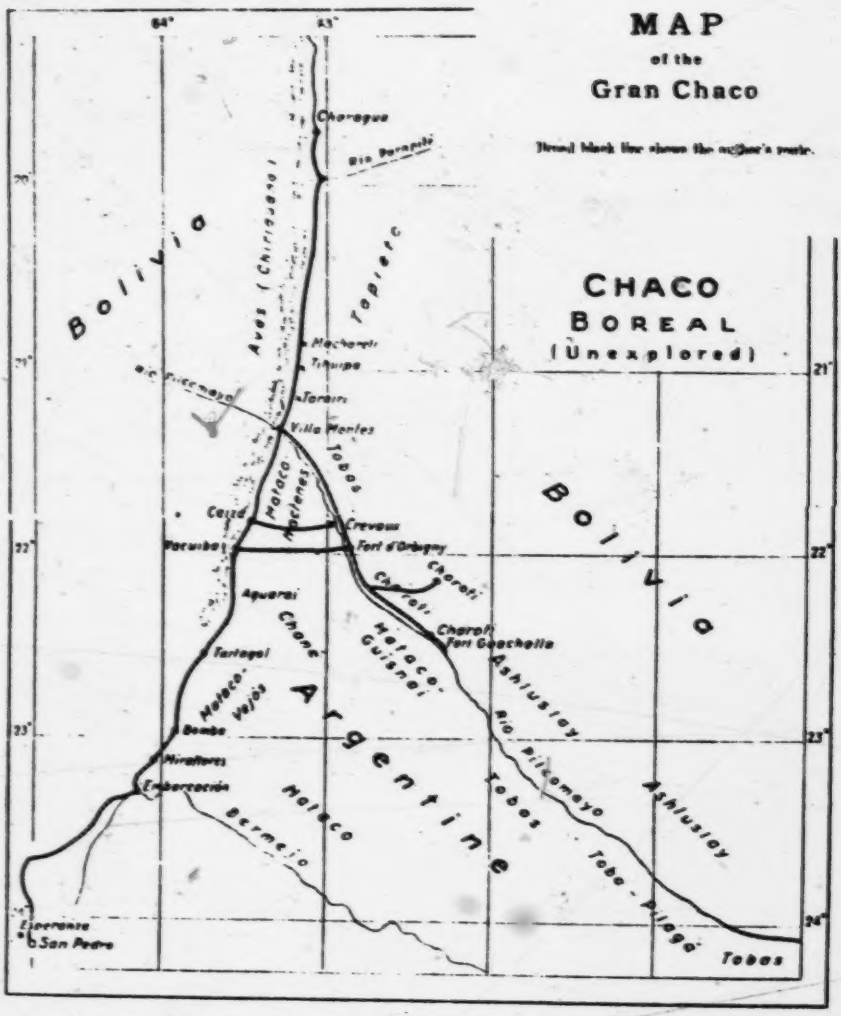

Choroti SK6
Mataco SI7
Güisnais

Ci 301 302 171 /321 cont./ Doubtless through being very close to the Toba, they pierce their ear lobes, in which they put pieces of wood, and they also stain their faces.

Ci 648 [464] In the expeditions to the Paraguay they have never shown themselves to be hostile to the whites and soldiers; rather they have lent important services and it was they who saved the life of Señor Touvar and his companions when they became separated from the expedition. Therefore the reduction of these Indians to civilized life would be very profitable.

Güisnáis

M 131 101 These Indians occupy the western bank of the Pilcomayo facing the Choroti Indians and southwest of the region occupied by the Mataco. The geographic degree of their territory, with a very slight difference, is the same as that of the Choroti, since they are separated from the latter only by the river bed.

M 101 181 241 231 197 They are a division of the Mataco; they speak the latter's language with very little difference; their customs are nearly identical and their number quite small. They are of a peaceful nature like the Choroti, and like them, they plant gourds and other vegetables. They also devote themselves to the raising of domestic animals, such as cows, horses, sheep, goats, and chickens.

M 167 177 464 224 Even the Güisnáis frequently come out for jobs in the Argentine Republic, from where they also bring back weapons, in order to use them particularly in the woods, killing birds, wild boars, deer, and other quadrupeds.

M 174 771 776 [756] They have more religious ideas than other tribes, and it seems that their great-grandparents might have belonged to some former Argentine mission, because, more than others, they recognize a true divinity. /322/ Nonetheless in their great ignorance they confuse ideas, and in great fear they recognize in sorcerers a power that they do not have.

AMS 101 131 102 133

2: Metraux E-4 (no date) 1946 SI4 Abipon SI4

Matacó SI7

[Facing p. 198 (A)]

CHIQUITO
CHANÉ
GUANÁ
MBAYÁ
CADUVEO
(CADIGUEGODI)
CHAMACOCO
(ZAMUCO)
MOROTOCO
1711
CUCURATE
GUACHI
GUATÓ
Lagunas de los Xarayes
Río Tobaty
Río Paraguay
Río Pilcomayo
Río Bermejo
Río Grande de Guapay
Río Parapití
Río Salado
Río Negro
Río Otuquis
Río Itiyuro
Río Tarija
Río San Juan or R. Pilaya
R. Pirity
R. Blanco
Sierra Caipipendi
Sierra Aguaragüe
Sierra Tucumán
Sierra Zapla
Sierra Santa Victoria
Sierra Cayoja
Sierra Cayoja
Sierra Cayoja

Z: Metraux E-4 (no date) 1946 SI4 Abipon SI4
Mataco SI7

A M
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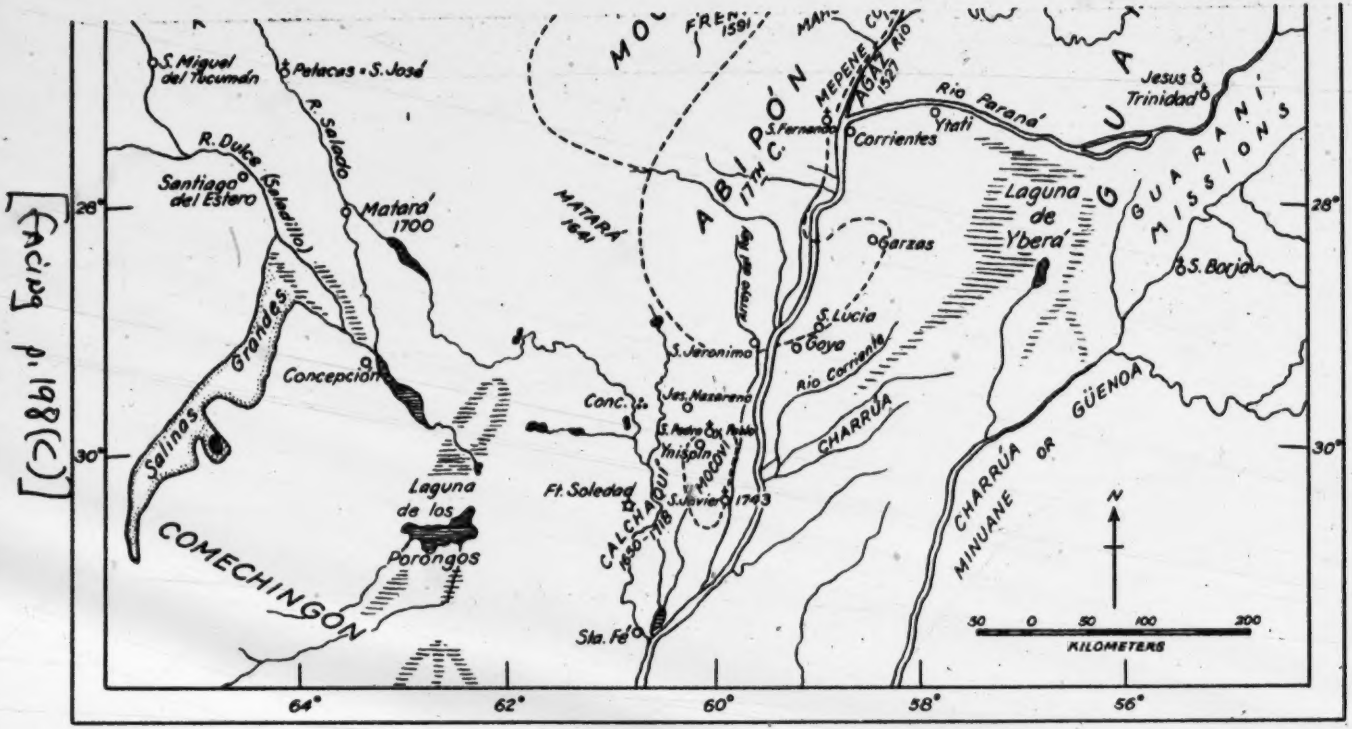
[Facing p. 198(B)]



MAP 4.–Tribes of the Gran Chaco: Locations at the first European contact.

GPO O - 48 - 583488 (Face p. 198)

[Facing p. 198(C)]

A M ● 101 131 102 133

2: Metraux E-4 (no date) 1946 SI4 Abipon SI4
Matco SI7